

CONFIDENTIAL

10-721

January 11, 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing of Chairman Cannon of the House Appropriations Committee.

At Mr. Cannon's request, I called alone to see him on the afternoon of January 8, and spent about an hour with him. It was clear from the outset that Mr. Cannon did not wish to discuss our budget problems, but wished to get a general briefing from me with regard to certain phases of the world situation, and in particular Soviet advances in the armament field and our relative position vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. I gathered, and this impression was confirmed by a casual conversation I had subsequently with Senator Saltonstall, that Mr. Cannon was gathering information in order to orient himself with respect to the overall budget requests. In the course of the conversation he remarked that he thought that the President's request for supplementary defense funds for FY 1958 should be promptly granted.

Mr. Cannon's questions covered the field of missiles, submarines, aircraft, etc., and I gave him the same general information previously given to the Johnson Committee and the Vinson Subcommittee. Mr. Cannon then asked about my views as to our general situation vis-a-vis the Soviet Union and I said that while I was not really competent to pass upon the technical details of our own position in the military field, I could give him certain impressions. I said that I saw no reason to get panicky but that a special effort would be required to close the gap with the Soviet in the field of ballistic missiles. I made it clear that in my opinion at the present time we were probably stronger than the Soviet Union in the overall military field, particularly because of our great retaliatory capability in the bomber and nuclear fields. I also stressed our geographical advantages due to our overseas bases and hence our nearness to the USSR heartland.

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